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USDA TO HOLD MEDIA CONFERENCE ON FOOD

USDA will host a "Focus on Food" conference for writers, editors and broadcasters on August 15-17 in Washington, D.C. The seminar will be held in conjunction with USDA's "Food and Fitness Fair" August 16-18.

Ann Chadwick, USDA's consumer affairs adviser, says the journalists include those who cover food, science and health, consumer, feature and life style topics and will be from print and electronic news media.

Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block, Assistant Secretaries Mary Jarratt, Bill McMillan, Orville Bentley and William Lesher will meet with the writers and editors in a day-long "news conference" to discuss topics of interest.

Also taking part will be agency administrators Donald Houston, Robert Leard and Isabel Wolf, economic analysis staff director Terry Barr and USDA information director John McClung.

Tours that have been set up for the attendees include a VIP tour of the Food & Fitness Fair on The Mall before the official opening at 10 a.m., Thursday, August 16; a special tour of USDA's Agricultural Research Center at Beltsville, Md.; and a feature tour of the national country garden and the national herb garden at USDA's National Arboretum in northeast Washington, D.C.

Chadwick expressed appreciation at the Public Affairs Council meeting last week for the cooperation of several USDA agencies involved in the conference.

She particularly cited the Agricultural Marketing Service, Agricultural Research Service, Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service, Economic Analysis Staff, Extension Service, Food & Nutrition Service, Food Safety & Inspection Service, Human Nutrition Information Service and Office of Information. The Food & Drug Administration also will take part in one of the sessions.

For more information about the "Focus on Food" conference for journalists, contact Ann Chadwick, Director, Office of Consumer Advisor, Room 232-W, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call 382-9681.

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INFORMATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE PLANNED

The director of USDA's Office of Information, John McClung, told agency information directors at last week's USDA Public Affairs Council meeting that a new information advisory committee is being formed.

The committee of eight USDA agency information heads will advise the director of information on matters of policy and information management.

Assistant Secretary for governmental and public affairs, Wilmer Mizell, has asked each program assistant or under secretary to name an agency information head to serve on the committee for one year.

The first meeting of the new group is scheduled for July 25.

CHANGES IN USDA NEWS DIVISION

Some changes in assignments have been made in the News Division of USDA's Office of Information, according to USDA news chief Jim Lafferty.

Clay Napier has been named editor of the weekly "Farm Paper Letter." He succeeds Ed Curran, who retired recently after serving as editor of the newsletter for many years.

Napier has been a public affairs specialist with the Office of Information for 9 years, first with the Special Programs Division and the last 4 years with the News Division handling news and features primarily about USDA research and environmental programs.

The "Farm Paper Letter" is mailed to several hundred farm magazine and newspaper writers and editors and other agricultural communicators. The 4-page weekly also is available electronically via "USDA Online," the electronic news and information service of USDA.

Napier also will write two weekly columns distributed to weekly newspapers "Food for Thought" for urban and suburban weeklies and "Agriculture Today" for rural papers.

Meanwhile, a new column for the minority press, called "Minority Report," will be written and edited by Rufus Wells. A similar version, edited by Phil Villa-Lobos, will be distributed to the Hispanic press.

Wells has been a public affairs specialist with the News Division for 14 years. Although he's been USDA's liaison with the minority media for years, the last 3 years he has handled news and feature releases covering food assistance programs and rural development. Villa-Lobos also is a public affairs specialist in the News Division responsible for Hispanic news services.

NEW YORK EXHIBIT UNVEILED AT STATE FAIR

"New York State Agriculture: Foundation for the Future" is the theme of a major Cornell University exhibit to be unveiled at this year's State Fair in Syracuse, Aug. 25-Sept. 3.

The exhibit is being developed jointly by the state Department of Agriculture and Markets, the state Health Department, the Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva, and Cornell University.

The exhibit will occupy more than 10,000 square feet. It will give the public an overview of New York agriculture, including both historical perspectives and portrayals of agriculture today in the Empire State.

USDA COMMUNICATORS ARE LEADERS IN OPEDA

Public affairs specialists with USDA's Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service are not only actively involved in the Organization of Professional Employees of the Department of Agriculture--better known as OPEDA--but some take leadership positions.

Otis Thompson, in charge of ASCS field information services, is OPEDA's current national president.

Gordon Forsyth, a public affairs specialist in ASCS' information division, recently was re-elected for a 3-year term as OPEDA Region 25 representative.

Walter John, who retired a few months ago as executive director of OPEDA, also was a former ag communicator. He retired as information director of USDA's Extension Service several years ago before going on to the OPEDA position.

LISTINGS OF COMMUNICATORS BEING REVISED

The "How to Get Information from USDA" listing is being updated. The revised edition of the popular "yellow sheet" will be sent to all "Inside Information" recipients as soon as its available.

Anyone needing extra copies of the listing should get in touch with Nancy Bevis as soon as possible. Contact her through the Dialcom AGR001 mailbox, by calling (202) 447-7454 or in the Special Programs Division, Office of Information, Room 536-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

Another listing being updated is that of agricultural communicators on the Dialcom electronic mail system. The list has been growing recently, including more agricultural media. The Special Programs Division will provide this list to those on the electronic mail system as soon as the update is completed.

FINDING MEDIA GOLD IN UNLIKELY PLACES

Good stories are all around, even in the most unlikely places, if public information officers will take time to visualize the possibilities.

USDA's Office of International Cooperation & Development has just come out with a pamphlet listing college courses in agricultural and rural development available in the United States to foreign agriculturists from the Third World.

The technical training project is a cooperative venture of USDA, Agency for International Development, Department of State and land grant universities. The foreign students are funded by AID, UN's Food & Agriculture Organization, international development banks, Third World governments, foundations and private organizations.

Larry Marton, international information officer with Special Programs Division of USDA's Office of Information, is familiar with the technical training project. So he took the new pamphlet to Jonathan Harsch, Washington bureau chief for AgriData Network news service and FARM FUTURES magazine.

Marton touched on the content of the college course, mentioned the concept and extent of the technical training project, and brought up a few statistics about U.S.-Third World agricultural trade. Result: Harsch will sit in on some of the classes, which are being offered in Washington, D.C., and in more than 20 states, and then plans to write a feature story for FARM FUTURES.

So there is media gold in unlikely places, even in dry catalogues.

INFORMATION WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS LISTED

Several upcoming workshops and seminars for public information/public affairs practitioners have been announced by two professional development groups.

One course is specifically designed to meet the needs of those employed by federal, state and municipal governments. It will be chaired by Jim Gorman, chief of the Census Bureau's Public Information Division.

"Government Public Affairs/Public Information: New Trends, Plans, Practices" is being offered September 17-18 in Washington, D.C., through the professional development program sponsored by New York University's School of Continuing Education and the Public Relations Society of America. The cost for the 2-day workshop is \$445. It will be held in the Mayflower Hotel.

Other upcoming seminars sponsored by NYU/PRSA in Washington, D.C., are: "Public Affairs/Public Relations Research as a Management & Evaluation Tool," September 17-18; "The Speech as an Effective Public Affairs/Public Relations Tool," September 17-19; and "Preparing Top Executives for Radio & Television Interviews," September 17-18. Fees range between \$495 and \$595.

NYU/PRSA also has several workshops scheduled during the next five months in New York and Chicago.

To enroll or get information about NYU/PRSA courses, call (212) 682-1435 or write to: NYU/PRSA Public Affairs Management Program, 310 Madison Avenue, Room 1412, New York, NY 10017.

Meanwhile, the Professional Development Institute also is conducting a series of public affairs/information seminars during the next few months.

"Streamlining Government Public Information Programs," a 2-day course will be held in Washington, D.C., August 27-28. The instructor is Wayne Pines, vice president and senior counselor with Burson-Marsteller and former associate commissioner for public affairs for HHS' Food & Drug Administration. The fee is \$445, and also will be held in the Mayflower Hotel.

Two other upcoming PDI seminars in Washington, D.C., are: "How to Work with the Media," August 27-28, instructor Owen Daley, senior vice president, Hill and Knowlton Inc., and "Marketing Strategies and Publicity Planning," August 27-28, instructor Ted Cott, managing partner, Kanan, Corbin, Schupak & Aronow Inc. The fees are also \$445.

PDI also conducts seminars and workshops in New York and Chicago, with several on the list for the next five months.

To enroll or get information about PDI courses, call (212) 490-3895, or write to: The Professional Development Institute, 242 West 38 Street, Rm. 500, New York, NY 10018.

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Word processing and electronic mail are the baby steps toward total office integration, according to a senior consultant with Hanagan & Associates, Inc.

One major step to office integration, said Susan S. Kay, is connection of electronic mail to the data base and tying the data base to the word processing system to complete the circle.

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to either Stan Prochaska or Nancy Bevis, Office of Information, Room 536-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington,